

## 2026 Strike

# STRIKE LINE MEDIA GUIDE



## Talking Points

While LAUSD writes blank checks for tech, they are offering educators a paltry raise and refusing to fund the supports and resources students need. Spending billions on consultants and for-profit companies while starving schools is not the path to a thriving public school system.

### Our Demands Move Schools Forward

- **Better pay:** LA's high cost of living is causing a teacher shortage. LAUSD must offer educators a fair wage increase and fix the broken, inconsistent salary schedule.
- **More mental health supports for students:** Schools need more PSAs, PSWs, and school psychologists, who are crucial for student well-being.
- **Penalties for class size and caseload violations:** LAUSD must be held accountable when it puts too many students in a classroom, impacting their educational experience.
- **More support for Special Education:** Special Ed teachers need more support, resources, and staffing to be able to give their students the individualized support they need and deserve.
- **Limits on subcontracting and AI:** Ed tech and AI cannot replace the role of the teachers, librarians, and counselors. Students thrive because of the relationships, care, and human connection we provide — not screens or new software.
- **Support for immigrant families:** We must fight to keep our schools safe from ICE for our students, LAUSD families, and each other. Every student, regardless of documentation, has the right to a free education.

### LAUSD Has a Priority Crisis — Not a Budget Crisis

#### LAUSD has the money to settle our contract

- LAUSD started the school year with \$5.03 billion in reserves — 35% of total expenditures, when the state only requires reserves of 1%.
- In addition, the governor's state draft budget includes a healthy increase in revenue for schools next year.
- Since 2022, LAUSD has committed almost \$2 billion for tech contracts with little oversight.

#### LAUSD educator pay is in crisis

- 21% of LAUSD educators earn salaries that qualify them for low-income housing.
- 30% of LAUSD educators have a second job to make ends meet.
- 35% of educators leave LAUSD within five years due to low pay and working conditions.
- The average LAUSD salary ranks 18 out of 21 comparable school districts — in the bottom 20%.
- More than 700 classroom positions were not filled by a permanent teacher in the 2024-2025 school year.

# Responses to Tough Questions

## ***Isn't it true that LAUSD can't afford your proposals because they are going broke?***

LAUSD has a priority problem – not a budget problem. LAUSD started the school year with \$5.03 billion in reserves, and the governor's state draft budget includes a healthy increase in revenue for schools next year. Since 2022, LAUSD has committed \$10 billion to multi-year private contracts. It is frustrating that resources that should go directly to classrooms are being withheld, while absurd amounts have been spent on outside contractors that cannot provide the day-to-day support our children need. Students' education should not come second to private companies.

## ***You claim to be doing this for the students, but isn't the strike hurting them the most?***

We believe the real harm to students is a school district that commits \$10 billion for contracts with private companies and stores billions of dollars in reserves instead of spending it on your children and their classrooms. The district is losing teachers – 35% leave within their first 5 years on the job. Teachers are trying to turn things around. After more than a year of negotiations, the school district has failed to adequately address the issues that we know are essential to a healthy, nurturing educational environment, like more counselors and mental health supports for students and better pay to attract and retain educators.

## Interview Best Practices

- **Get familiar with talking points and key messages ahead of time.** Choose the contract demands that resonate most strongly with you and put the messages in your own words, with details from your personal experience. Your strongest tool is to tell your or your school's story: what you're on strike for, what your school/students need. No one tells these stories better than you do.
- **Keep answers short and concise.** Don't get too nuanced, especially if it is a TV or radio interview – they will cut down what you say down, and you want to make sure they get the right parts.
- **Keep your tone positive and friendly.** Reporters may ask some aggressive or confrontational questions, but don't get drawn into a debate. Remain calm, don't repeat their negative statements, and keep repeating your talking points.
- **You don't have to answer the question they asked.** Consider the question a "topic" and use that topic to talk about what you want to talk about. Always pivot back to the message. Some good pivot phrases:
  - » "What this all means is..."
  - » "What's absolutely critical to remember is..."
  - » "What people should be more concerned about is..."
- **It's okay not to respond to every question.** You don't have to know all the answers – your expertise lies in your role as an educator and your connection to students and your school. Never guess or speculate, and don't answer hypothetical questions.
- **When you speak to reporters, imagine you are talking directly to parents and the community.** What do you want them to know about our fight?
- **For taped interviews, if you stumble on an answer, or if you believe you can respond shorter or with a better response, ask if you can answer the question again.**